

This week Congress returned to Washington to begin the second session of the 111th Congress. There are many items on the agenda as we start the year, including healthcare reform, financial services regulatory reform, as well as appropriations bills to fund the government's operations. This week I've focused on working with the Marine Corps, who are currently in the process of deciding where to move three Marine Corps Security Force companies currently based at Norfolk, Virginia.

These companies are a dedicated security and counter-terrorism unit that provides security forces to guard high-value naval installations, most notably those containing nuclear vessels and weapons. Currently one such company is already based at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, and that facility fits the requirements of the Marines' search. The Marine Corps weighs many factors in deciding where they will move the three remaining Security Force companies. These include mission and training requirements, capacity, environmental considerations, cost, and community support. Additionally, fiscal constraints and the cost of new facilities or training ranges are one of the more challenging aspects of their decision.

The Yorktown community is a fantastic supporter of not only our Nation's Marines, but all of our men and women in uniform. Also, the Yorktown Naval Station has ample space to support the Marines' training requirements. If Yorktown is selected, I am certain the local community will be willing to support new construction projects and infrastructure, which could create additional jobs in these tough economic times.

Since October, I've been working to see those 800 Marines and their families are relocated to Yorktown. My efforts include chairing a planning meeting with York County Administration Officials and receiving a briefing from Pentagon Navy and Marine Corps officials on the proposed consolidation plan. I've also had a discussion with the Commanding Officer of the Marine Corps Security Force Regiment and written Marine Commandant James Conway to relay the interest of both local officials and community members in welcoming the additional Marines to Yorktown.

The Marine Corps could make its decision over the next month or so and I know the First District would be honored to have them make Yorktown their home. I will continue to work on behalf of the Yorktown community and the Marines as we move through the decision making process.

*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.*